Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) and the Politics of Civic Panegyric

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The paper:

Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516) is most often seen as inaugurating an entirely new genre – utopianism – that immediately seized the imagination of early modern Europe, and which has continued to inflect many different forms of social and political thinking ever since. This paper, by contrast, suggests that Thomas More’s brilliant book might be better understood as a barbed contribution to an already well-established mode of renaissance political reflection: the genre of civic panegyric. In doing so, it offers some new perspectives on two key interpretative problems: the Utopians’ form of government; and where Utopia might be found.